

May 14, 2018

Dear Parks Commissioners,

I wish to comment on the proposed Mt. Bike facility in Ashland Creek Park.

Simply put, Ashland Creek Park is being developed under a Master Plan that was the result of a very public process and, to date, has not even completed its phased development. On this basis alone, the proposed bike facility should be a non-starter.

Furthermore, as you well know, the park exists in one of the most prominent riparian areas in Ashland and, during the public process for the Master Plan, there was strong consensus bordering on unanimity that sustainability and protection of the natural landscape be of paramount importance to the identity and design of the park. Ironically, when I proposed that a ½ court basketball hoop be included in the design (there is no court within 7/10 mi. of the park) the groans and hissing were audible in the room composed of community gardeners and sustainability advocates. I am pleased that Phase 2 includes the court (which I think could double as a pickleball court), in spite of the fact that an attractive lawn was developed in the exact spot where apparently the court is planned. But this argument is for another day.

I fully support the efforts of the outside mountain biking group to develop their plan, given that they identify a site and there is adequate demand and outside funding. Curiously, I might add that I and probably everyone involved with that proposal learned well how to become riders without having access to such a facility.

But Ashland Creek Park is NOT the place to shoe-horn this facility into a newly-developing park in a sensitive riparian watershed, and under a master plan that has not yet begun to see its full development according to clearly-articulated phasing.

I could only imagine that young, newly-competent riders would venture off to other parts of the park to test their new skills, and thus negatively impact the surrounding landscape.

While I fully recognize that change happens, in this era quite rapidly, and that we humans need to respond to these changes nimbly and creatively, in this particular case there is no good reason to consider any further this proposal at this time for this place.

Thank you for your attention and for your service to our city.

Respectfully,

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